

Buckeye Flyer



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A 445th C-141 leaves Germany headed for Baghdad with Iraqi children after receiving medical care from Germany, U.S., and other nations under the Coalition Provisional Authority program. (Photo printed with permission by Edward Ornelas, Express News)

Mercy flights for Iraqi children

By Capt. Jose Cardenas
445th Public Affairs

In conjunction with a Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq, crew members and planes from the 445th Airlift Wing are flying medical mercy missions for wounded Iraqi children. Unofficially dubbed "Operation Iraqi Children," the flights are necessary due to the limited resources and facilities in Iraq. The children are flown to Ramstein Air Base, Germany, to receive the proper medical attention they need.

During the last six months 220 children have been treated in the United States, Germany and other nations under the CPA program.

The mercy flights are not without the fear of danger. Members of the 445th are aware of the potential dangers, but accept it as "part of the job." As the unit's C-141 nears Baghdad under the cover of darkness, thoughts of terrorists firing rocket-propelled grenades or anti-aircraft missiles fill the minds of the passengers as the interior lights dim to a red glow.

But saving lives, helping those less fortunate, and providing care and comfort

are not the only goals of "Operation Iraqi Children." Winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people, even though secondary, carries an importance too high to ignore or take lightly. Some Iraqi war victims believe the injuries they sustained may have come as a result of American actions, yet they come to know that such incidents are unintentional.

Knowing that there are many health care professionals and hospitals that would like to assist with CPA missions, those assigned to this duty feel that their Operation Iraqi Children missions are as vital as the overall coalition efforts in Iraq.

A new beginning



445th Wing Chaplain

King David, a person referred to as "a man after God's own heart," was guilty of adultery and murder. When these sins were pointed out by the prophet Nathan, David repented of his sin and wrote Psalm 51. In that Psalm, David asked God to cleanse him, create in him a clean heart, and renew his spirit. In essence, David asks God to start over. God is a God of new beginnings.

As we approach 2004. We will celebrate the beginning of a new year on the calendar. It can also signify a new beginning in our lives. There may be habits or ruts we want to shed. This is a good time to start afresh. God can start over in our lives, just like He did with King David. Remember, with God's help, we can live victorious lives. Have a wonderful 2004.

Ringling in the New Year

By Brig. Gen. Rusty Moen
445th Commander

Eight days till Christmas and I'm sitting at my desk writing this short column as we attempt to meet publishing deadlines, yet for most of us Christmas has already arrived. That happened during Sunday morning of the UTA, Dec. 14, when the word of Saddam Hussein's capture was broadcast to the world. Everywhere I went on Sunday you could feel the excitement and joy in all the people I met and talked with. We continue to hope that this will lead to a decrease in the attacks on our forces. The 445th continues to provide daily missions in support of our forces, with the primary mission being the air evacuation of our wounded and injured troops back to Germany and the United States.

By the time you read this edition of the Buckeye Flyer we should have received word on whether we will be allowed to selectively demobilize some of our people. The wing's contributions to the war effort this past year are nothing

short of spectacular. We continue to have large numbers of volunteers who are deploying each month in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and ongoing Aerospace Expeditionary Force requirements, adding to the work being done by our 580 mobilized members. Starting in January, we will again be supporting Operation Deep Freeze, the re-supply of our scientific stations in Antarctica.

A good New Years resolution for most of us would be to get in better physical condition for the upcoming year as the Air Force implements it's new fitness program. The harsh environment that many of you have already deployed to demands a higher level of physical fitness.

Losing weight is not just about going on a diet, it's about an overall lifestyle change and all of us would like to be in good health when we start drawing our reserve retirement checks at age 60!

Wishing you all slimmer waistlines and prosperity in 2004. And a big thank you for your past performance and all you continue to do for our great nation.

Helpful Healthy Hints

By Wright-Patt's Health and Wellness Center

1. Plan Ahead
2. Shop from a list and never grocery shop on an empty stomach
3. Eat slowly; pay attention and enjoy the food you are eating
4. Resist sampling food products as you cook
5. Plan three meals per day
6. Exercise!
7. Look at the number of calories beverages contribute to your diet
8. Celebrate you success!

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The local perspective of the guard and reserve



By Staff Sgt. Charlie Miller
445th Public Affairs

I read somewhere recently that less than 10% of the U.S. public has any “real” contact with the military community. That is, they are not related to or even know anyone on active duty, in the reserves or National Guard. I’ve been in positions where I’m talking to someone who knows very little about the military, and most of the time it seems strange to me.

I’m a traditional reservist. My civilian job is at the Springfield, Ohio office of the U.S. Postal Service. I was in the lobby there one day helping a customer and somehow our discussion turned to the military. But in this case I casually mentioned about being in the Air Force Reserve.

What happened with that customer though generally happens almost every single time I mention, “Reserve”; I get a response about the Springfield Air National Guard base and my being in the Guard. That’s understandable. The guard base is closer to Springfield than Wright-Patterson is and the local Springfield newspaper covers it a lot more than it covers Wright-Patterson, so the mix up is pretty common.

What happens to me after I field a comment mixing up the guard and reserve is text book. I’m just like one of Pavlov’s dog. I go directly into this rehearsed set of explanations about how the Springfield Air Guard flies fighter jets and I’m at Wright-Patterson which, by the way, my 80-year-old mother still calls “Wright Field”, and sometimes just “the Field”, at which point I sternly correct her because she was a Private First Class in World War II and should be abreast of these things especially since the name changed in 1950

for goodness sakes. What’s with her anyway?

Without hesitation I explain that at Wright-Patterson, we fly those big slow planes they see flying fairly low overhead. They always relate to that because the C-141’s are always cruising in the air above Springfield.

Fact is, not only do I feel more secure when I watch military jets, fighters or cargo haulers, fly overhead but I’m proud to see them. I did have one civilian guy tell me very matter-of-factly that the reason that the planes are always flying around Springfield and Clark County is because they are bringing in more supplies for the current build-up. I told him that I thought that the slow and low flying C-141’s over our area are most likely new pilots getting training. Insider information. Don’t call intelligence, the Inspector General, security forces or anyone else for that matter. I don’t want to go to jail. I have big family with six great kids and a wonderful wife to take care of and if I go to jail that would really mess things up. (Whoa, wait a minute! If I actually *were* to go to jail, then there’s no possible way under the sun that child number seven could possibly come along. On second thought, here’s my address and phone number....)

Let’s cut to the chase. Here, without question, is my very favorite reaction; “Oh, you’re at Wright-Patterson? Do you know Bob/Barb Johnson? I’m pretty sure he/she works on airplanes. I know he/she has been there for a number of years.”

Oh, great. That certainly clears things right up! Well, after hearing that comment I usually let them know that there about 2,000 of us in the reserve at the base and, you know, that’s a lot of people all dressed exactly alike: same type of haircuts, green outfits, identical black

boots. I don’t try to find out where their friend may work. And I never, ever even begin to explain what a “Wing” or a “Squadron” is. I guess I’m just a big ol’ chicken.

Concerning these interesting reactions, I’m happy to report that I am not in this alone! Fellow Springfield U.S. Postal Service employee and 87th Aerial Port Squadron member Tech. Sgt. Larry Moorman has had the same things happen to him. Now, Larry spends a decent amount of time in the post office lobby because he’s the guy who fills up all the vending machines with stamps in them, puts out the Internal Revenue Service tax forms, change of address cards, fixes the copier that’s out there for the public to use and puts those annoying Sacajawea dollar coins in the stamp machines that you get as change after you just needed one stinking stamp for your late house payment and only have a five and have to stick it in the machine so the payment can get mailed

Larry will stand out there and do his best to explain the differences between the guard and the reserve all while the guy Larry is talking to only wanted to know if he, in fact, knows Bob/Barb Johnson who works on airplanes, they think, and he/she has been there for years. You should see their eyes get all glassy and glazed over when Larry goes into his spiel! Let me tell you it’s the old deer in the headlights thing. Hey Larry, just tell them you can have a recruiter stop over to their house tomorrow night and see what happens! Jeesh!

Where will it end? It probably won’t. But we can all do our level best to inform and promote the 445th Airlift Wing, the Air Force Reserve and the military in general when in the public’s eye. I hope you don’t get the strange reactions like I do!



Staff Sgt. Nicole Wilcox, left, and Senior Airman Shannon Hodge, 87th Aerial Port Squadron, offers holiday cookies to residents of the VA Nursing Home. (Photo by Chris Polites, 445th Public Affairs)

Wing entertains residents of VA Center

By Staff Sgt. Charlie Miller
445th Public Affairs

Many businesses and families have annual traditions; summer picnics, reunions, Thanksgiving gatherings, Christmas and holiday gift giving, and members of the 445th Airlift Wing is not an exception with our tradition of visiting The Dayton Veterans Administration Nursing Home at Christmas time.

The Air Force Sergeants Association again graciously invited the 445th to be part of the holiday party on December 13. This year marked the seventh year of involvement for the wing. The AFSA has been sponsoring Christmas parties each year for nine years at the center, but has been involved with other events at VA

centers around the country for about 25 years.

Many Christmas gifts were given out, along with plenty of good food. Some of the AFSA members brought their children. The kids did some of the present distribution to the VA residents.

"I think this is great," said WW II veteran Lynn Stutrud, a resident of the VA Center. "I like this very much." Stutrud, who hails from North Dakota, was a Staff Sgt. in the Army.

Sharon Croteau, the Chief of Volunteer Services at the center said that the Christmas party is always a huge event for the residents.

"Twice a year, the AFSA with the reservists put on all-patient parties. While everyone thinks of their own families at Christmas, some of the residents here

don't have any family at all. Making them part of a family like this is important," Croteau said.

It was Senior Airman Chris Bruther's first visit to the VA Center. "This is something worthwhile. I'll come back here every chance I get," said Bruther, who is with the 87th Aerial Port Squadron.

"One of the residents sang 'White Christmas' to me while I pushed him in his wheelchair to the dining room," Bruther said.

"This is a wonderful way to share the holidays with those that dedicated their lives to the military and are now unrecognized in today's society," said Staff Sgt. James Walberg also of the 87th APS.

Wing commander Brig. Gen. Rusty Moen went table-to-table visiting with the

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veterans. Some seemed surprised that a one-star general would be casually walking around the dining room chatting with whomever he could strike up a conversation with.

"It's a pleasure for the 445th and the Air Force Sergeants Association to spend time here," Brig. Gen. Moen said as he addressed the residents. "We owe a debt of gratitude to you, the veterans." More than 30 active duty airmen and several dozen reservists, some with their families and friends, threw the Christmas party for the residents.

The vets certainly enjoy seeing people in uniform. Most have "war stories" to tell of their time in the service and many have sons or daughters serving in the military. The vets are quick to speak proudly of their children's service.

Active duty Air Force members who are part of the AFSA again prepared and served lunch to the vets in the center's main dining area. Members of the 445th took some of the party to the veterans in their rooms upstairs and in another residential care center nearby. Wing members passed out socks, homemade Christmas and holiday cards, lap blankets, gift baskets and toiletries to the vets in their wards who, due to physical challenges, could not come to the main dining area.

Another tradition - free haircuts - continued much to the delight of about 20 vets. Tech. Sgt. Steve Adams of the 445th Civil Engineers Squadron again served as the volunteer barber and was perhaps the busiest wing member there. Many of the residents cannot go off the grounds for haircuts. Some have little money to spend on hair care, so an offer for a free haircut always brings a crowd.

Adams, whose family hair care business is located north of Dayton in Northridge, was once again one of the last 445th members to leave the center.

And the tradition that is also very popular with the residents continued; the Air Force Band of Flight's "Systems Go" performed Christmas and holiday music. Several residents danced with reservists and VA Center employees.

Indeed, a good time was had by all.



Brig. Gen. Rusty Moen, 445th Commander, takes the time out to spread holiday cheer to the VA residents at the VA Christmas Party. Brig. Gen. Moen talked to the residents and thanked them for their military service. The residents were amazed that a general took the time out to come to their party. (Photos by Senior Airman Chris Polites)



Tech. Sgt. Steve Adams from the 445th Civil Engineers Squadron, gives a haircut to a VA resident during the VA Christmas party. "One elderly man who was very frail that could hardly sit up in the barber chair applauded at the conclusion of the party thanking the members who came out to give haircuts it made it all worth while," stated Tech. Sgt. Adams.



Airman 1st Class Rachael Slone from the 87th Aerial Port Squadron, talks with Wallace Thorton a WWII Army veteran. Reservist from the 445th Airlift Wing listened to many "war stories" that the residents shared. Many residents recalled their experience in the military and what it was like. The residents were also proud to mention that their family members who joined the military and are now serving their country.

Tax relief law aids military, families

Reservists who travel more than 100 miles to attend drills or meetings no longer have to itemize to claim a tax deduction for overnight travel expenses.

This change and other benefits for members of Air Force Reserve Command and their families are the result of the Military Family Tax Relief Act of 2003, signed into law by President George W. Bush Nov. 11. The "above-the-line" deduction for overnight travel is retroactive to Jan. 1.

"(Reservists will) be able to deduct unreimbursed travel expenses such as lodging, 50 percent of meals and any transportation costs," said Lt. Col. Janet Fenton, director of the Armed Forces Tax Council.

Another major change increases the death gratuity payment to \$12,000 and provides that the full payment is tax-free. That portion of the act is retroactive to Sept. 10, 2001, to provide for servicemembers who died in the terrorist attacks the following day and in the ongoing global war on terror.

"If you are killed on active duty, regardless of whether you're in theater, or in a training accident or die from disease, your family receives \$12,000 death gratuity that is not taxed," Fenton said. "And that's a big change. In addition, any future increases to the death gratuity will remain tax-free."

Since 1991, the death gratuity had been \$6,000, with half of it being taxed, Fenton said.

"It just didn't seem to be fair for the military family who was left grieving for their servicemember to get hit with a tax bill," she said.

When the tax code changed in 1986, it allowed any military benefit existing in September 1986 to remain tax-free, Fenton said. However, it was always unclear whether military child care was included in that, she added.

"This act merely makes it clear that those provisions of child care were intended to be tax-free to military members," she said.

The tax act also provides for extra tax-filing time for servicemembers serving in contingency operations. The internal revenue code allows servicemembers who are serving in combat zones or hazardous-duty areas to have an extension of time - usually 180 days from the time the person leaves the combat zone - to file taxes.

"A lot of military operations don't rise to the level of being declared by the president as 'combat,'" Fenton said. "But there are several contingency operations where servicemembers are outside the continental United States."

The act also includes modifying eligibility criteria of tax-exempt veterans organizations; tax-free treatment of homeowners' assistance program payments; suspension of tax-exempt status for designated terrorist organizations; and extension of victims' tax relief to astronauts who die on space missions.

Capital-gain exclusion for home sales is another area people are looking for tax relief in, Fenton said.

"This act will allow members to suspend the period of time which they have to sell their home and take the tax exclusion so they won't have to pay that capital gains," she said. "It's retroactive to 1997 so military members who have sold their homes since 1997 have one year from Nov. 11, 2003, to request a refund for any tax they did pay."

Since 1997, when the law was previously changed, if servicemembers who owned a home got reassigned more than 50 miles from that home or was ordered to move on post, they were no longer able to roll over the gain from that sale to the next home they purchased.

Also since 1997, individuals could exclude up to \$250,000 (\$500,000 for married couples) of gain from the sale of a home if they resided in it for two of the five years preceding the sale. Under this act, military and foreign service people can suspend (for up to 10 years) the time transferred away from home on official extended duty for purposes of applying the five-year portion of the two-out-of-five-year rule. (*Air Force News Service*)

Unlimited commissary benefits

The Department of Defense announced Nov. 24 that with the president's signing of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004, effective immediately, the following members and their dependents will be permitted unlimited access to commissary stores:

1 Members of the Ready Reserve (which includes members of the Selected Reserve, Individual Ready Reserve and Inactive National Guard) and members of the Retired Reserve who possess a Uniformed Services Identification Card.

Former members eligible for retired pay at age 60 but who have not yet attained the age of 60 and who possess a Department of Defense Civilian Identification Card

2 Dependents of the members described above who have a Uniformed Services Identification Card or who have a distinct identification card used as an authorization card for benefits and privileges administered by the Uniformed Services.

For more information about the Defense Commissary Agency, see its Web site at www.commissaries.com

Promotions

Congratulations to the following personnel, recently promoted to the rank indicated.

Airman



Jondra Boles, 445 ASTS
Ryan Burtnett, 445 MSF
Mary Cotterman, 445 AMDS
Jonathon Eaton, 445 CES
Matthew Greenside, 445 ASTS
Holly Hucke, 445 ASTS
Adam Longberry, 445 ASTS
Andrew Surritt III, 445 ASTS

Airman First Class



Brandi Stanley, 445 CES

Senior Airman



Shannon Hodge, 87 APS
Anne Marriott, 445 MSF
Dwayne Fries, 445 AMXS

Senior Master



Sergeant

Michael Wheeler, 445 CES

Newcomers

Welcome to the following reservists, recently assigned to the 445th AW:

AB Mary Cotterman, 445 AMDS
AB Brett Koppel, 445 ASTS
Amn Carlton Banks, 445 AMXS

Amn Amanda Edge, 445 AMDS
Amn Anna Tracy, 445 LRS
A1C Brandon Barnett, 87 APS
A1C George Burton, 445 AES
A1C Tiffany Downs, 445 CLSS
A1C Heather Holbert, 445 AES
A1C Joshua McCrabb, 445 SFS
A1C Joshua Oram, 87 APS
A1C Gregory Plant, 87 APS
A1C Lakeisha Reed, 445 CLSS
A1C William Rogers, 445 SVF
A1C Brit Royse, 445 CES
A1C Tiffany Watkins, 445 CES
A1C Leah Watts, 445 LRS
A1C Charles Wilson, 445 MXS
A1C Afton Wright, 445 AES
SrA John DeSilva, 445 CES
SrA Dana Smith, 445 AMDS
SrA Matthew Treadway, 445 CF
SSgt. Cassandra Burrows, 445 MSS
SSgt. Reed Collins, 445 AMDS
SSgt. Vincent DeMonbreun, 445 SFS
SSgt. Michael Duvall, 87 APS
SSgt. Ryan Madrid, 356 AS
SSgt. Steven Purvis, 87 APS
SSgt. Michael Takacs, 445 SFS
SSgt. Roni Thornton, 445 ASTS
TSgt. Justin Craighead, 445 LRS
TSgt. David Francis, 445 CES
TSgt. Brently Harting, 445 AES
TSgt. Kevin Wheeler, 445 CES
MSgt. Richard Brewer, 445 ASTS
MSgt. Bryan Fitch, 445 OSF
MSgt. Billy Pollard, 89 AS
Capt. Rhonda Moll, 87 APS
Maj. Granger Butler, 445 ASTS
Maj. Karen Gregory, 445 AES

Awards

Congratulations to the following 445th AW members who recently earned awards.

Meritorious Service Medal

Capt. James Moore, 87 APS
SMSgt. Jacqueline Larison, 87 APS

Air Force Commendation

MSgt. Dana Logan, 445 MSS
TSgt. Gerald Johnson Jr., 445 AES
TSgt. Mark Lockhart, 445 MXS
TSgt. Leslie Bueschen, 445 MSS
TSgt. Gregg Palmer, 445 MXS
SSgt. Tracy Johnson, 445 MXS

Air Force Achievement

CMSgt. Patrick Hogenbirk, 445 CES
SMSgt. Steven Omeara, 445 CES
MSgt. Willie Hooper, 445 CES
MSgt. Robert Humble, 445 CES
MSgt. Harley Sheppard II, 445 CES
TSgt. Kenneth Finch, 445 CES
TSgt. Barry Nichols Jr., 445 CES
TSgt. Douglas Orbas, 445 CES
TSgt. Paul Taynor, 445 CES
TSgt. Mark Young, 445 CES
SSgt. Eric Baldrige, 445 CES

SSgt. Dale Quigley, 445 CES
SSgt. Sean Sullivan, 445 CES

Reenlistments

Congratulations to the following 445th AW members who recently re-enlisted in the Reserve.

SrA Chad Evans, 445 SFS
TSgt. Donald Benedum, 445 AMXS
TSgt. James Brown, 445 AMXS
TSgt. James Cochran, 445 AW
TSgt. Gerald Ewing, 445 CLSS
TSgt. Mark Frederickson, 445 SFS
TSgt. Gary Hill, 445 AMXS
TSgt. Robert Ivory, 445 AMXS
TSgt. Thomas Kelley, 445 SFS
TSgt. Christopher Mayer, 445 SFS
TSgt. Barry Nichols, 445 CES
TSgt. Ivory Orr, 445 CLSS
TSgt. James Partlow, 445 MXS
TSgt. John Patten, 445 ASTS
TSgt. David Roth, 445 AMXS
TSgt. Robert Rowe, 445 CLSS
MSgt. John Dornon, 445 MXS
MSgt. Jo Ann Russo, 445 CLSS
MSgt. Mark Young, 445 CES
SMSgt. Robert Davis, 445 CLSS
SMSgt. Catherine Helsel, 87 APS



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Act gives military pay raise and other benefits

The fiscal 2004 National Defense Authorization Act offers better health benefits and an overall average military pay raise of 4.15 percent.

President George W. Bush signed the defense bill Nov. 24. The act authorizes a minimum pay hike of 3.7 percent with additional increases to midgrade and senior noncommissioned officers and midgrade officers.

To improve readiness, the law allows Department of Defense officials to provide immediate medical and dental screenings and care to reservists who are assigned to a unit that has been alerted or notified of mobilization.

Reservists can obtain improved TRICARE coverage until Dec. 31, 2004, under the following circumstances:

— Nonmobilized reservists and their families can enroll on a cost-share basis if the reservist is unemployed or the

employer does not offer health insurance.

— Coverage for mobilized reservists and their families can begin up to 90 days before the start of the reservists' active duty. Previously, coverage started only when the active-duty period began.

— Coverage can continue up to 180 days after separation from active duty. Previously, coverage lasted up to 60 or 120 days after separation, depending on the years of service.

Another change expands eligibility for family members to enroll in DOD Dependents Schools on a space-available, tuition-free basis. In the past, this benefit was limited to families of reservists who were recalled from an overseas location. The change also allows DODDS enrollment if reservists are recalled from a continental U.S. location. (Courtesy of Air Force Reserve Command News Service)

Wing Notes

Demobilized reservists get uncharged leave

Five days of uncharged civilian leave has been directed by President Bush for federal employees returning from Guard and Reserve duty in the war on terrorism. The Nov. 14 memorandum covers all employees activated for military service in connection with operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Agencies may grant this period of excused absence before the employee's resumption of duties or at a time mutually agreeable to the agency and the employee if the employee has already returned to duty, according to the Office of Personnel Management. For more information, contact the 445th Reserve Pay at 7-4397 or read the Air Force Print News article at: <http://www.af.mil/stories/story.asp?storyID=123006054>

The unit mourns

Major Lawrence J. "Larry" Smith, a reservist with the 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, passed away suddenly at the age of 54 on December 9th at his residence. Major Smith was a RN Flight Nurse and an RN at Wright-Patterson Medical Center. He was a veteran of the Vietnam War serving as a Medic and a RN Flight Nurse in Bosnia. He is survived by his wife, Lynda, and son, Jeff.

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The wing response to the news

By Staff Sgt. Charlie Miller
445th Public Affairs

It was the height of a snowy December morning for the 445th Airlift Wing reservists who were reporting for duty. Reservists reporting in to Building 4010 huddled around television screens in the public affairs office or any office with a TV as the news was about to have a briefing on Saddam Hussein.

As the official news broke, by L. Paul Bremer, the U.S. administrator in Iraq – "Ladies and gentlemen, we got him" cheers and applause thundered throughout the building. According to Mr. Bremer Saddam was captured at approximately eight o'clock in the evening of December 13th.

"I was glad to hear the news," said Tech. Sgt. Dave Ellessor, of the 445th Airlift Wing Safety Office. "It's something that all Americans have wanted to hear for quite some time. There could be some retaliation, some enemy flexing, but I'm excited yet cautious."

"It's obviously a good thing," said Tech. Sgt. Kellie Hamilton of the 445th Airlift Wing Judge Advocate Office. "I'd like to be there for his trial."

According to Maj. Gen. Ray Odierno, commander of the 4th Infantry Division, the "Ace of Spades" in America's "Most Wanted" deck of cards was found in a compound near the village of Adwar, about 15 miles southeast of Tikrit, his hometown. He was captured in a dirt hole in what was termed a "spider hole." Saddam had a pistol



Channel 2 news reporter, Bradley Livesay, interviews Brig. Gen. Rusty Moen, 445th Commander, following the news of Saddam Hussein being captured. (Photo by Senior Airman Chris Polites, 445th Public Affairs)

on him, which he never used and about \$750,000 American dollars was found in the residence on the property where the hole was located.

Other wing members were also elated of the capture of Saddam by coalition forces.

"It's a great Christmas gift," said Brig. Gen. Rusty Moen, 445th wing commander to a Channel 2 news reporter later that day. Shortly after the news broke, the local TV news crew was looking for someone in military uniform to comment on the capture of the former Iraqi dictator.

Brig. Gen. Moen went on in the interview to say, "Our mission, at least the one the 445th is doing right now, is going to continue, and that is evacuation of the injured."

Although the wing's mission won't change immediately for the 580 reservists still activated, but the news of the capture of Saddam made this December UTA one to remember.

